DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 209 695 CS 503 649

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TITLE Internship Problems and the Academic Advisor's Role.
PUB DATE Nov 81
NOTE 38p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association (67th, Anaheim, CA, November 12-15, 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Advising; *Education Work Relationship; Employer Employee Relationship; Faculty Advisers; *Internship Programs; Occupational Surveys; *Organizational Communication; *Speech Communication; *Speech Instruction

ABSTRACT

As the business world has recognized the practical value of college programs designed to prepare students for careers, internships have begun to receive increasing attention as valuable additions to the speech communication curriculum. To discover the problems both interns and their faculty advisers face during the course of an internship, questionnaires were mailed to internship coordinators at 130 speech departments and to 62 student interns who had been identified on the faculty questionnaire. The questionnaire elicited information concerning task related and intrapersonal and interpersonal problems that occurred most frequently and were perceived as most important. Forms were returned by 55 faculty members and 31 interns. Two problems were consistently ranked high by both faculty members and interns in terms of importance and frequency: insufficient task instruction and insufficient feedback about task performance. In terms of intrapersonal and interpersonal problems, "intern unclear about learning objectives" was ranked as the most frequent and important problem by faculty members and as the most important by interns. Lack of feedback ranked as the next most important and frequent problem from the intern's perspective, and both faculty members and interns felt that job supervisors occasionally failed to solicit feedback from interns. (FL)

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Internship Problems and the Academic Advisor's Role

by

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Paper presented at the 67th Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association, Anaheim, California, November 14, 1981

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Rationale for the Study

Internships, "structured practical professional experience under the supervision of qualified academic and agency personnel for academic credit" (Konsky, 1977, p. 15), have received increasing attention as valuable additions to the speech communication curriculum. The business world has recognized the practical value of internships in preparing students for careers. A division manager for Dayton-Hudson Corporation, a major midwestern retailing firm, adopts the personnel dictum that the best predictor of future performance is past performance and suggests that while high GPA's are important, ". . . internships and after school jobs can be better indicators of how an applicant will perform on the job" (St. Paul Pioneer Press, 1980). Alva C. Cooper, a consultant on career services and contributor to a position paper published by the College Placement Council, suggests that:

> Faculty, career counseling, and placement people, in cooperation with employers, should make available to students such experiential education opportunities as internships, cooperative education, and part-time and summer work to acquaint them with the real work world (St. Paul Pioneer Press, 1980).

In 1980, the Speech Communication Association recognized the value of internship experiences during its Action Caucus on Curricular Implications for a Changing Job Market. Three specific recommendations emerged from the Caucus meetings at the San Antonio convention regarding internships:

1) Internships in business, government, social services, health care, academic administration, and other settings should be integral parts of a departmental curriculum as fully accredited options on both undergraduate and graduate levels.

2) SCA should take major responsbility for actively encouraging departmental and administrative support of internship programs.

3) SCA should take responsibility for sponsorship of some internships, to be available on a national basis.

Hence, the concept of internships is receiving support from business as well as from professional, academic organizations.

A glance at recently published directories of internships indicate increasing opportunities for students to engage in this type of experiential learning. For example, the National Society for Internships and Experiential Education publishes a Directory of Washington Internships which identified approximately 160 potential placements, some having openings for several interns, in its 1979-80 catalogue. That same organization's 1981 Directory of Undergraduate Internships listed approximately 350 placements; again, many had openings for several students. Regional clearinghouses to help place interns have also appeared in Boston, Philadelphia, Providence, Minneapolis-St. Paul, and in several other cities. Other national organizations have emerged to support internship efforts including the Cooperative Education Association (CEA), the Council for the Advancement of Experiential Learning (CAEL), and the National Center for Service Learning (NCSL).

Articles within our own discipline have provided rationales and suggestions for starting internships within speech-communication departments (Wolvin & Jamieson, 1974; Alexander, 1975; Downs, 1975; Huseman, 1975; Porterfield, 1975; Sanborn, 1975; Downs, Harper, & Hunt, 1976; Romano, 1976; Konsky, 1977; Parker, 1977; and McCroskey, 1979).

Internship programs are becoming an important part of the communication curriculum and the national educational scene. Thus, it seemed appropriate to move beyond the problems we face when establishing internship programs within communication departments to explore the problems both interns and advisors may face during the course of an internship. Identifying internship problems and suggesting solutions were the goals of this survey research project.

Specifically, a questionnaire was designed to answer the following questions:

1) What task-related problems did faculty members and interns identify as most frequently occurring and as most important in internship success?

2) What intra- and interpersonal problems did faculty members and interns identify as most frequently occurring and as most important in internship success?

3) Were there significant differences between interns' and faculty members' perceptions for the importance of any problem? Were there significant differences between interns' and faculty members' perceptions of the frequency of any problem?

4) What suggestions did faculty and interns offer to help advisors deal effectively with task and interpersonal internship problems?

5) What critical incidents did faculty and interns cite to exemplify internship problems and internship success?

Procedures

A questionnaire was developed to identify internship problems in two major areas: task performance and intra- and interpersonal communication. These two dimensions are somewhat parallel to the familiar organizational communication dimensions of task and human messages. Issues of task performance relate to how a worker produces a product or gets a job done. The intra- and interpersonal dimension refers to those aspects of interaction directed at "people within the organization, their attitudes, satisfaction, and fulfillment" (Goldhaber, 1979, p. 128). The term intrapersonal was used since three questionnaire items (interns' learning objectives, lifestyle adjustment, and readjustment to academia) did not directly involve relationships with other people. The questionnaire was sent to 130 of the departments listed in the SCA Directory of Graduate Programs in care of the departmental internship coordinator. Questionnaires were also sent to 62 student interns who were identified on the faculty questionnaires. A total of 55 completed questionnaires was received from

faculty internship coordinators and 31 completed questionnaires were received from student interns. Questionnaire construction and respondent selection are detailed in the following paragraphs.

Questionnaire Construction

The items for the questionnaire were generated from five sources: 1) experiential learning literature, 2) structured personal interviews with internship coordinators at the departmental and college levels, 3) interviews with former student interns in speech-communication, 4) presentations and conversations at a 1981 University of Minnesota conference on "Experiential Learning in the College Curriculum" and 5) the researcher's five years of observations and experiences as a departmental internship coordinator and advisor.

Those items most frequently mentioned were selected and arranged as nine questionnaire items for each of the two dimensions: task performance and intra- and interpersonal communication. Colleagues and former interns critiqued and helped refine preliminary questionnaires. Following precedents set by many organizational communication questionnaires, it was decided to assess respondents' perceptions of each item's importance to internship success as well as the item's frequency of occurrence during internships. It clearly seemed useful to know what minor problems to anticipate frequently and what less frequent but significant problems may arise. Respondents were asked to rate each item on a five-point frequency scale ranging from 1 - usually occurs - to 5 - never occurs and on a five point importance scale ranging from 1 - a very important factor in the internship's success to 5 - a very unimportant factor. A rating of 0 indicated that an item was not applicable to the respondent's situation. (Only one respondent out of a total of 86 rated any item as

irrelevant, thus indicating items had some face validity.)

Four open-ended questions were included asking for 1) suggestions for intern advisors about minimizing task problems, 2) suggestions for intern advisors about minimizing interpersonal problems, 3) a critical incident exemplifying a major internship problem, and 4) a critical incident exemplifying an intern's success.

Additional data about the size and type of internship program were requested. Finally, faculty respondents were asked to provide names and addresses of former interns so that a similar questionnaire might be sent to them. (Such a request may be easily and justifiably perceived as an invasion of students' privacy. Nonetheless, it seemed the only means available to get at interns' perceptions of their experiences. The fact that 26 of the 55 faculty respondents did provide names and addresses of interns lent legitimacy to the request and made it possible to incorporate intern responses into the study.)

The questionnaires sent to faculty asked them to respond in terms of their undergraduate interns if they were involved with both an undergraduate and graduate program. Four respondents worked only with graduate students; these questionnaires were not included in the data analysis.

The questionnaire sent to interns was identical to the questionnaire sent to advisors with some minor pronoun changes in the questions.

Respondents

Respondents were selected from the 1980-81 Directory of Graduate Programs on the assumption that larger departments would be more likely to have the resources to support internship programs. If the department's program or financial aid description included explicit reference to internships or to experiential learning, a questionnaire was sent to the department to

the internship coordinator. Those departments indicating programs in organizational, business, professional, governmental, or media communication were also included. These areas seemed to have experienced particular growth in internship programs and so were included. As a result of this search, 130 questionnaires were mailed. Thirty-nine completed questionnaires were returned. A follow-up mailing was done to the departments which did not respond initially. An additional 16 completed questionnaires were received resulting in 55 completed questionnaires constituting 42.3% of the original sample. Twenty-one departments indicated they had no formal internship program, and two departments responded that they declined to provide information on the topic. The overall response rate was 60.0%.

Questionnaires were sent to 62 interns; intern names were obtained from the faculty questionnaires. Thirty-one interns returened questionnaires for a response rate of 50.0%. Questionnaire were sent to interns in mid-May. Since many students change addresses for the summer, several potential respondents may not have received the questionnaires.[1]

Demographic Data. Before presenting the survey's results, a quick overview of the demographic data obtained from respondents is in order. Departments represented ranged in size with two responses from departments having 25 to 50 majors to responses from seven departments having over 500 majors. The median category for number of majors in the departments surveyed was from 150-200.

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[1]Clearly there are some limitations of the study in terms of respondent selection. By sampling from the Directory of Graduate Programs, many smaller universities and colleges--often innovators in experiential learning--were excluded. Student respondents were also "selected in" by their advisors. A follow-up study is planned to gather data on internships in smaller, undergraduate institutions.

Seven departments had had internship programs for the past two years, 11 departments began internships two to four years ago, 14 departments had had programs for four to six years, 10 departments established their programs six to ten years ago, and 7 departments had had internships for more than ten years. Sixteen respondents indicated that their departments adivsed up to ten undergraduate interns per year, nine departments advised from 10 to 20 undergraduates, and 14 respondents advised from 20 to 30 interns per year. The number of departments sponsoring more than 30 undergraduate interns per year dropped off sharply with five departments having 30 to 40 interns, four with 40 to 50 students, three departments with 50 to 60 per year, three with 70 to 80 interns, and three departments indicated they sponsored more than 100 interns per year. Of the thirty-six departments which had graduate interns, 81% indicated they sponsored up to five graduate interns during the year.

The most frequently identified types of internships were in organizational communication (44 departments) and in mass media (34 departments). Other areas identified were : Public Relations (12 departments), Government/Political/Legal Communication (6 departments), Speech Pathology (5 departments), Theatre (5 departments), Interpersonal/Intercultural/Counseling Communication (4 departments), Management/Human Resource Development (3 departments), and Advertising/Photography (2 departments).

Interns were asked to indicate their academic classification when they interned (i.e., freshman, sophomore, etc.), whether they held a full time or part-time internship, how long the internship lasted, and the type of work they did. Of the 27 undergraduate interns responding, 78% interned as seniors; five student interned during their junior year. Seventy percent of the undergraduates and 75% of the graduate students

interned on a part-time basis.

The majority (59.3%) of the undergraduate internships lasted 12 weeks or more. Three of the four graduate respondents held 16 week positions; the other graduate had a nine to ten week internship. Forty percent of the undergraduates had internships lasting from five to ten weeks. Again, organizational communication placements and mass media positions were the areas in which most students worked; 12 undergraduates held organizational communication positions; 11 were in mass media; four identified public relations as their job area. Three graduate students worked in organizational communication and one in public relations.

Results of the Study

Problems with Internship Tasks

Faculty and intern responses to nine task items were tabulated to answer the question "What task-related problems did faculty members and interns identify as most frequently occurring and as most important to internship success?" Overall, the perceptions of advisors and interns of the frequency and importance of internship task problems were quite similar. Spearman rank order correlations of faculty respondents' mean ratings for each item and interns' mean item ratings on each of the two scales, frequency and importance, were significant. When faculty and intern item ranking of problem frequency were compared, $r = .6875$, $p < .05$. On the importance dimension, faculty and intern item rankings when correlated produced a rho of .6833, $p < .05$. Table 1 on the following pages presents the task item rankings and the mean ratings:[2]

[2]Note that there are not wide variations in the ratings. Frequency ratings range from 3-occasionally occurring through 4-rarely occurring. Importance ratings range from 2-a moderately important factor through 3-an average factor, neither important nor unimportant. Because of these narrow ranges, the rank order of items was examined to better identify problem areas. Discussions of items ranking high or low must be interpreted in light of the relatively narrow range of ratings.

TABLE I

RESPONDENT TASK ITEM RATINGS
ON FREQUENCY AND IMPORTANCE

Item	Frequency		Importance	
	Faculty Rating/Rank	Intern Rating/Rank	Faculty Rating/Rank	Intern Rating/Rank
1. Insufficient task instructions on-the job	3.213 - 2	3.296 - 1	2.085 - 1	2.482 - 2
2. Not enough work given to intern	3.458 - 4	3.630 - 4	2.125 - 3	2.593 - 5
3. Too much work given to intern	3.563 - 5	4.074 - 7.5	2.917 - 7	3.074 - 9
4. Work too difficult or complex	4.043 - 9	4.222 - 9	3.298 - 9	2.778 - 8
5. Too many menial tasks given	3.031 - 1	3.741 - 5	2.208 - 4	2.556 - 4
6. "Chain of command" unclear	3.625 - 7	4.074 - 7.5	2.750 - 5	2.630 - 6
7. Insufficient resources on-the-job (e.g., no desk, access to phone	3.936 - 8	3.852 - 6	3.128 - 8	2.519 - 3
8. Insufficient feedback about task performance	3.375 - 3	3.333 - 2	2.104 - 2	2.037 - 1
9. Time pressure - too little time to complete tasks	3.583 - 6	3.519 - 3	2.896 - 6	2.667 - 7

Two problems were consistently ranked high by both faculty and interns on importance and frequency: insufficient task instruction and insufficient feedback about task performance. These items were rated as occurring occasionally and as moderately important to the internship's success. Faculty respondents ranked "too many menial tasks given" as the most frequently occurring task problem; that item fell in the middle of faculty and intern importance rankings and intern freqeuncy rankings. The item consistently ranked low on both scales by faculty and interns was "work too difficult". Apparently, difficult tasks were not as major a problem as the other items. Interns perceived "too much work given" as the least important of the nine items. Faculty and interns generally agreed that problems with the "chain of command" and "not enough work given" were problems of occasional to rare frequency and of moderate importance; these items fell in the middle of the rankings.

Recall that the researcher was also interested in any significant differences between intern and faculty perceptions of item importance and between intern and faculty frequency perceptions. Some discrepancies between faculty and intern responses were discovered. T-tests of the faculty-intern importance ratings revealed one signficant difference: interns perceived insufficient resources (e.g., access to phone, desk space, etc.) to be a significantly more important problem than did advisors ($t = 2.0169$, $p < .05$). There were significant differences between faculty and intern perceptions about the frequency of three items. Advisors believed the following problems occurred more frequently then did interns: "too much work given to intern" ($t = -2.858$, $p < .05$); "too many menial tasks are given" ($t = -3.0252$, $p < .05$); and the "chain of command is unclear" ($t = -2.1738$, $p < .05$).

Summary of Task Responses. Faculty and intern perceptions of the relative importance and frequency of the nine task items were significantly similar. Both faculty and interns rated "insufficient task instruction" and "insufficient task feedback" among the top three most frequent and important problems. Faculty viewed too many menial tasks as the most frequent problem. "Work too difficult" was the least frequent and important problem cited. Interns also felt that "too much work given" was low on the importance scale. Perceptual differences surfaced in ragard to four items. Interns found "insufficient resources" to be a signficantly more important problem than did faculty. Faculty believed the following occurred significantly more often than did interns: "too much work given," "too many menial tasks given," and "chain of command was unclear." A response bias may have led interns to minimize the frequency with which some problems occurred. It is also possible, because of their direct experiences on the job, that interns had a more accurate estimation of how frequently some problems cropped up.

Intra- and Interpersonal Internship Problems

On the intra- and interpersonal items, faculty and intern perceptions of the relative frequency of the items correlated significantly. Spearman's rho calculated on the rank order of the frequency item means equalled .6708, $p < .05$. There was not a significant correlation between faculty and intern rankings on the importance scale ($r = .500$, $p > .05$). Table 2 on the following page presents the item rankings and mean ratings for the intra- and interpersonal dimension.

TABLE 2

RESPONDENT INTERPERSONAL ITEM RATINGS
ON FREQUENCY AND IMPORTANCE

Item	Frequency		Importance	
	Faculty Rating/Rank	Intern Rating/Rank	Faculty Rating/Rank	Intern Rating/Rank
1. Few attempts by supervisors, co-workers to "be friendly," intern excluded from social interaction.	3.783 - 6	4.192 - 4	2.913 - 8	2.192 - 4
2. On-the-job supervisor rarely solicits feedback, input from intern.	3.283 - 3	3.577 - 1	2.500 - 5	2.039 - 2
3. Intern hesitates to ask questions or give feedback	3.231 - 2	3.923 - 2.5	2.487 - 4	2.154 - 3
4. Intern experiences personal conflict with on-the-job supervisor	3.688 - 5	4.560 - 8	2.167 - 2	2.200 - 5
5. Intern experiences personal conflict with co-workers	3.896 - 7	4.539 - 7	2.730 - 6	2.327 - 6
6. Intern experiences personal conflict with academic advisor	4.333 - 9	4.654 - 9	2.444 - 3	2.885 - 8
7. Intern unclear about personal learning objectives	3.217 - 1	4.308 - 5	2.065 - 1	1.962 - 1
8. Intern has lifestyle adjustment problems e.g., coping with new location, commuting, finances, etc.	3.546 - 4	3.923 - 2.5	2.773 - 7	2.731 - 7
9. Intern has difficulty readjusting to academia on completion of internship	4.310 - 8	4.500 - 6	3.643 - 9	3.136 - 9

"Intern unclear about learning objectives" was ranked as the most frequent and important problem by faculty and as the most important problem by interns. Faculty rated this as occasionally occurring and being moderately important; interns rated it as moderately to very important but as rarely occurring.

Issues of feedback (items #2 and #3) ranked as the next most frequent and important problems from the intern's perceptive. Both faculty and interns felt job supervisors occasionally failed to solicit feedback from interns and both viewed this as a moderately important problem. Similarly, faculty respondents felt interns occasionally were reluctant to ask their supervisors questions or to give feedback; interns felt this occurred occasionally to rarely. Intern willingness to question or give feedback to supervisors was viewed as a moderately important factor in internship success by both faculty and interns.

Among the items ranking low on the frequency and importance scales were "conflict with academic advisors" and "problems readjusting to academia". Faculty and interns rated advisor conflict as rarely occurring but moderately important. This item was third in faculty importance rankings but eighth in the interns' importance rankings. (This accounts for the lack of significance in the faculty - intern importance correlation.) Recall that a large difference in rankings doesn't necessarily reflect a large difference in means. However, it is understandable that academic advisors would view conflict with an intern as a key stumbling block to develping objectives, negotiating outcomes, and evaluating progress. Interns may view conflict with on-the-job supervisors and co-workers as more important since those are the people with whom the intern is in most

immediate contact throughout the internship. Interns and advisors rated readjustment to academia as rarely occurring and as neither important nor unimportant for the internship's success. More notably, this item ranked lowest in importance for both interns and faculty and also fell low in the frequency rankings.

Issues of conflict with job supervisors, co-workers and social integration into the work group (item #1) all tended to fall in the middle of the rankings on importance and frequency. Interns rated these items as occurring rarely; faculty respondents indicated they occasionally occurred. Both interns and faculty rated these issues as moderately important with interns seeing integration and co-worker conflict as slightly more important than advisors did.

In examining the signficant differences between faculty and interns' perceptions of interpersonal items, several significant differences appeared. There were more differences between faculty and intern perceptions on interpersonal items than on task itesm. T-tests revealed that on the frequency scale, interns felt there were more attempts at social integration on the job than faculty members perceived ($t = 2.0262$, $p < .05$). Interns also indicated that they asked questions and gave feedback more than advisors noted ($t = 2.8052$, $p < .05$). Students believed conflict with supervisors ($t = -5.3299$, $p < .05$) and with co-workers ($t = -4.0989$, $p < .05$) occurred less often than did advisors. Finally, faculty believed that unclear learning objectives were more often a problem than did interns ($t = -5.983$, $p < .05$). These differences may be due to a response bias akin to the need for social approval; interns may underestimate the frequency with which problems occurred during their work. On the importance scale, faculty and intern perceptions differed significantly on only

one item: few attempts by co-workers to be friendly and integrate the intern into the work group. Interns viewed that as a more important issue than did advisors ($t = 2.1939$, $p < .05$).

Summary of Intra- and Interpersonal Responses. Faculty and intern perceptions of the relative frequency of intra and interpersonal problems were significantly similar. Their perceptions of item importance were not significantly similar due primarily to faculty ranking advisor conflict as a notably more important problem than did interns. Unclear learning objectives was the most important problem cited by all respondents and the most frequent problem identified by interns. This is consistent with Konsky's (1977, p. 21) observation that ". . . a recurring comment by students . . . . is that they wish they had known even more about what was expected of them during the internship." Konsky thus suggests that a syllabus, including objectives, be developed for each internship.

Job supervisors' infrequent requests for feedback and interns' hesitancy in giving feedback were also ranked high in frequency and importance. Problems involving personal conflict with job supervisors and co-workers and group integration problems fell in the middle of frequency and importance rankings. The item ranked lowest in importance was readjustment to academia, and the item ranking lowest in frequency was personal conflict with the academic advisor.

Suggestions for Improved Advising of Interns

In addition to the importance and frequency ratings of task and interpersonal items, four open-ended questions were posed. Two of these questions were designed to answer the general research question: "What suggestions did faculty and interns offer to help advisors deal with task and interpersonal problems?" The specific questions on faculty questionnaires

were 1) "For those task-related problems which you rated as both frequent and important, what have you, as an advisor, done in the past to successfully minimize those problems?" and 2) "For those intra- and interpersonal problems which you rated as both frequent and important, what have you, as an advisor, done in the past to successfully minimize those problesm?" Interns were asked 1) "For those task-related problems which you rated as both frequent and important, what should academic advisors do to minimize those problems?" and 2) "For those intra- and interpersonal problems which you rated as both frequent and important, what should academic advisors do to minimize those problems?"

To analyze the qualitative data, the researcher grouped similar incidents together and then generated categories and labels to reflect those groupings.

Coping with Task Problems. Faculty suggestions to advisors about task problems were classified under four main headings: 1) the planning process, 2) the feedback process, 3) student preparation, and 4) student evaluation. Sound preliminary planning was the technique most frequently suggested as a means of avoiding task problems. Sixteen faculty respondents mentioned this out of a total of 22 respondents who answered the question. More specific aspects of planning cited by respondents were having students prepare written applications, discussing job duties in detail with the employing agency, preparing a contract with the intern and the agency, and having direct on-site contact with the job supervisor during the planning process.

Attention to feedback, the next most frequent suggestion, was cited by 11 faculty respondents. This category included such specific suggestions

as scheduling on-going meetings with the intern, having on-site meetings with the intern and job supervisor, meeting with several interns in weekly practicum or informal seminar sessions, and counseling the intern. Several faculty respondents stipulated that "counseling" interns about task problems emphasize encouraging students to observe the situation and then develop a strategy for handling problems on their own without the academic advisor's intervention.

Items referring to student preparation and to student evaluation were mentioned much less often. Three faculty members stressed being sure that the student had solid skill preparation before interning and that knowledge and skills be refined with additional required reading during the internship. Two respondents mentioned the importance of having interns do final papers and of obtaining final written evaluation from the job supervisor. These latter evaluation suggestions certainly are useful in identifying strengths and weaknesses of the intern and the placement but would not seem to help advisors and interns deal with task problems during the internship.

Interns' suggestions for advisors about task problems fell in three categories, two of which were similar to suggestions offered by faculty respondents. These areas were the feedback process and the planning process. The third category, unique to student responses, was labeled "contingency planning." Of the 16 interns answering this question, 11 students made suggestions for improvement in feedback about the internship. Eight of these suggestions stressed more communication between the job supervisor and the faculty advisor through on-site visits and ongoing contact. Three interns emphasized improved communication between the faculty advisor and the intern, including personal meetings to discuss

problems and increased written communication to keep advisors informed. One student specifically noted that there should be direct communication, not messages filtered through some other person.

Improvement in the planning process was suggested by 10 students. As did faculty respondents, students stressed developing specific goals and clearly identifying tasks the intern was to perform. One part-time intern also wished faculty advisors would "understand the classwork priorities of the intern and help develop tasks accordingly." An additional facet of planning was included in a suggestion of more on-site visits. This respondent urged advisors to check physical resources for the intern when making an initial on-site visit, i.e., will the intern have a desk or reasonable space in which to carry out tasks? This is consistent with the importance students gave to physical resources on the nine-item rating scale.

Finally, three interns made suggestions grouped under the heading of "contingency plans." These were suggestions about coping with changes which occur during internships. One suggestion from an intern working during a major agency shake-up was to "get a firm committment about supervision, time, and tasks which would be held to even if organizational emergencies arose.". This also included having only one specific supervisor assigned rather than several people, thus reducing the problem of conflicting instructions.

Coping with Intra- and Interpersonal Problems. Responses to the question about suggestions for minimizing intra- and interpersonal problems were also categorized. Faculty responses to this question were grouped under three headings: the counseling process, the selection process and the feedback process. The term "counseling" was selected as a separate

category, distinct from feeback because the specific term "counseling" appeared more frequently than any other suggestion about interpersonal problems. Counseling the student was mentioned by 11 respondents out of 16 people answering the question. Some respondents further defined counseling to include "helping students develop clear initial expectations," and "helping students understand their role as an intern." Again, counseling suggestions emphasized helping students analyze problems so that they could then attempt to solve the problem on their own.

The other two categories of suggestions occurred less often. Three faculty respondents stressed having a strong selection process to screen out students not personally ready to undertake internships; one respondent advocated giving older students priority. Another three respondents emphasized close contact among the intern, job supervisor and academic advisor through all phases of the internship, from initial planning to final evaluation. This was categorized as a suggestion to maximize feedback.

Again, categories devised to encompass intern suggestions about minimizing interpersonal problems paralleled faculty response categories: the counseling process and the feedback process. Interns also made suggestions about the planning process. Ten interns provided the following suggestions about the counseling process between intern and academic advisor: 1) the advisor should show interest in problems, including personal ones such as finances, 2) the advisor should suggest further training for interns (assertiveness training was the example specifically mentioned), 3) advisors should devise some role play situations for the student prior to the internship, 4) advisors should schedule regular individual meetings with interns as well as group sessions with several interns, 5) advisors

should help students learn to re-negotiate contracts at the agency if necessary and 6) the advisor should encourage students to build rapport with everyone they contact on the job.

Five interns suggested improvements in the feedback process between the advisor and job supervisor. These included more frequent and open feedback sessions and encouragement from the advisor to the supervisor about integrating the intern into the work group.

Finally, two students again stressed sound and specific planning of job duties. One respondent, perhaps having experienced a discrepancy between expectations and reality, said, "have a preliminary meeting to determine the role the intern will have, not the role he thinks he should have." Many of the interns' critical problem incidents can be summarized in the comments by Whitham and Stanton (1978):

> . . . we observed our students quickly becoming overwhelmed by the conflicting demands of learning and working beyond the protective confines of the campus . . . . After a lifetime of individualized competitive academic achievement, they experienced stress adapting to the more complex interpersonal and interdepartmental dynamics of an office or department. They seemed to miss the continual feedback that comes through academic evaluation and grading and they became mired in self-doubt wondering if they were doing a good job or the right job . . . . Even our brightest and most mature students, working under our most sensitive and competent supervisors, experienced this anxiety and failed to gain as much from their experience as they wanted or we expected (pp. 23-24).

This also suggests, as noted earlier, that advisors should not attempt to solve all problems. Rather, interns must learn to work through and live with supervision & feedback often less specific than the academic norm.

Summary of Advising Suggestions. The two predominant suggestions from both interns and faculty about task problems dealt with the planning process and the feedback process. Suggestions for planning focused on specifying job responsibilities, preferably in written form. A key

suggestion for effective planning was that the advisor make an on-site visit to the employing agency early in the planning process. Increased advisor, job supervisor and intern contact was the main suggestion for improving the feedback process. Respondents encouraged advisors to counsel students about how to solve problems themselves; direct advisor intervention was not advocated as a norm. A few faculty respondents suggested improvements in the intern selection and evaluation procedures. Interns also suggested better contingency planning -- being prepared to deal with changes in the employing agency. Here, the emphasis was on initially negotiating specific tasks and employer committments to better protect interns during organizational shake-ups.

Improvements in the counseling process were the predominant suggestions from all respondents for dealing with intra- and interpersonal problems. Counseling students to solve their own problems again was stressed. Respondents suggested some specific additions to the general counseling process including role plays, assertiveness training, and more individual and group meetings. More frequent oral and written communication among all parties was suggested to improve feedback. One dilemma posed by these suggestions is providing students with appropriate guidance while also helping them adjust to the work world--a world in which feedback about task and personal behavior is often more nebulous and less frequent than academia provides.

Internship Problem Indicators

The third open-ended question on the faculty questionnaire was: "In a few sentences, please describe an incident from one of your student's internships which best exemplifies what you consider to be a major internship problem?" This was designed to identify typical significant problem areas without suggesting specific problems to the respondents. Faculty critical

incidents were grouped into six main categories: under/over-employment problems, supervision problems, interns' personal problems, preparation problems, internal academic problems, and communicator style problems.

Critical incidents of intern under-employment were far and away the most often cited indicators of internship problems. Twenty-one respondents (out of 35 answering the question) noted incidents of interns having too little to do, of being assigned unvaried tasks, of being given menial work for too long a time, or of having the internship contract violated by the agency. One respondent described a problem thus: "The students end up sitting around in an unstructured environment for the 15 week term."

The next most often occurring category, mentioned by six respondents, was on site supervision problems. This category included such incidents as too little feedback from supervisors, having two supervisors giving conflicting orders, having a supervisor perceived as sexist by the intern, and having perceptual differences between supervisor and intern ("one supervisor perceived the intern as not taking enough initiative when a difficult task was given to the intern with insufficient explanation"). A final incident included in this category involved a job supervisor described as using a "star" system resulting in much attention to one or two interns and very little attention to the other students.

Incidents involving personal problems of the intern were mentioned on five questionnaires. This category included problems with finances, problems of "being exploited by the agency," transportation and scheduling problems, and difficulties balancing family and job demands. One respondent described the disillusionment of some students about post-internship employment: "they fantasize too much [about getting hired] . . .all the time they are being benevolently exploited."

Four respondents noted incidents related to the preparation process of the internship. These included examples of a "bad match;" the student and agency weren't suited to each other. Three respondents cited problems due to students' vague, unspecified learning objectives.

Three faculty members cited incidents reflecting the problems of advising interns within academia. This included incidents of conflict with other academic departments who feared infringement on their "turf," and the problem of finding time and rewards for faculty to advise interns. One doubtlessly overworked professor suggested that there's not enough time for intern contact; "it comes out of the faculty member's hide."

The last category, communicator style problems, was developed on the basis of incidents cited by six respondents. These incidents described problems occurring because the intern's communcation style was too assertive in dealing with the job supervisor (two incidents) or because the intern was too non-assertive to clarify tasks and take additional responsibilities (4 respondents).

Interns' critical incidents illustrating internship problems were grouped into four main categories. Three of these were similar to those classifying problem incidents cited by faculty: supervision problems, under- and over-employment problems, and communicator style problems.

Twenty out of 26 interns providing critical incidents cited examples of supervision problems. These problems seemed to fall into one of two sub-categories: problems with unclear task instructions and problems of role strain. Twelve incidents reflected insufficient explanation of tasks, lack of overall orientation to the organization (an issue especially important to part-time interns), vague task objectives, or absence of

the supervisor or other key workers making it impossible to get information when needed. One intern summarized: "I was off in left field because no one sat down with me and explained the procedure." Another intern noted the lack of direct communication: "the supervisor talked about me but not to me."

The second sub-area of supervisor problems involved descriptions of role conflict with the job supervisor. This category included confusion about who the job supervisor was, poor relations with supervisors in other departments, unclear boundaries of the intern role, and threats to the supervisor's self-image. These last two items require further explanation. Finding appropriate role boundaries for the intern involves, in the words of one student, "doing a good job but not overstepping one's bounds as an intern." The dilemma sometimes confronting interns seemed to be the desire to "shine," to do an excellent job while simultaneously recognizing one's role as an apprentice, as a relative novice in the job area. Four incidents seemed to suggest that an intern occasionally posed a threat to the supervisor's self image. One respondent noted that the supervisor became very dependent on the intern's academic background to help the supervisor answer his immediate superior's questions. By contrast, another incident described a supervisor derogating "academic" suggestions. Another intern noted that several conflicts occurred after a change of supervisors due to general personnel shifts within the organization; no guidance was given the intern during the shift. Yet another intern described the problems thus: "I felt my enthusiasm and creativity posed a threat to my boss."

Eight incidents referred to problems of under/over employment. Seven of those were cases of underemployment: menial tasks, unvaried tasks, or

uneven pacing of tasks (too few to keep one occupied or several all at once). One intern noted "Often after a task was completed there was nothing to do the next couple of days." Lest menial tasks take on a totally negative connotation, one intern did state that "menial tasks are helpful to keep the work pace at an even rate. Too many high pressure tasks can be overwhelming and discouraging." Only one of the task problem incidents noted that there was too much work to do.

Communicator style problems, a category of faculty responses, encompassed three incidents cited by interns. Two incidents referred to interns' lack of confidence resulting in non-assertive, hesitant behavior. The other incidents classified in this category referred to interpersonal conflict with co-workers. The general lack of confidence was described by one intern: "There were no problems except personal problems that errupted as I took on a new identity and phase in my life."

Intern problem incidents fell into one additional category not noted by faculty respondents: the intern-advisor relationship. Five interns described incidents reflecting either too little advisor-intern contact or lack of advisor encouragement. One intern, apparently frustrated by a perceived lack of advisor feedback, responded, "he never really knew what all I did accomplish." Another intern complained about an insufficient explanation of internships from the academic advisor: "in some ways [academic advisors] tried to discourage participation."

Summary of Problem Incidents. Under-employment was a serious concern of faculty and a frustration for interns, although some noted that menial tasks can help the pacing of work. Interns were particularly frustrated by unclear instruction and occasional unavailability of job supervisors. Studetn comments revealed that finding an appropriate role--one which

did not threaten the job supervisor--could be difficult. A third problem area was interns' non-assertive behaviors on the job. Faculty members also noted administrative problems involving intern preparation and lack of institutional support or cooperation.

Internship Success Indicators

The final open-ended question to faculty members was: "In a few sentences, please describe an incident from one of your student's internships which best exemplifies what you consider to be successful learning on-the-job." The responses were grouped in categories which identified positive outcomes of internships from faculty members' viewpoints. These incidents coalesced into four categories: tangible experience, career advancement, real-world application, and personal growth.

The "tangible experience" category included those incidents in which a student was described as producing a tangible product, as having direct hands-on experience (e.g., mass media students mastering equipment), or as having direct input to decision-making in the organization. Such occurrences were noted by 22 respondents, out of 34 answering the question.

Incidents revealing career advancement constituted the second largest category; seventeen respondents noted that students acquired good recommendations for their placement file and gained knowledge about that career. In one case, such knowledge helped the intern realize that he disliked the job area and so changed career focus. But most notably, 16 of the 17 incidents involved the intern either being offered a job or actually being hired by the agency upon graduation. Faculty apparently do see hiring as a clear-cut indicator of a successful internship.

A third category was labeled "real world application." The six incidents in this category all made specific reference to an intern applying

theory in the "real world" or to the intern performing a variety of tasks. Although producing a tangible product, as in the preceding category, should involve both theory and practice, that former category had consistent references to a tangible product or decision. Real world application incidents described learning on a broader scale, i.e., integrating many theories with a wide variety of job tasks and situations. One faculty member's explanation was "seeing what life in the real world is like."

The fourth category was labeled "personal growth." Four faculty members described incidents reflecting an intern's personal development. This included references to seeking and being given increased responsibility and acquiring more assertive behaviors.

The incidents interns cited to exemplify internship success were grouped in three general categories. These categories--personal growth, tangible experience and real world application--were the same categories used to classify faculty answers to this question. However, there were some differences in the priorities given by faculty and interns to these categories.

Incidents reflecting tangible experience were the most numerous intern response; 20 interns described the satisfaction they derived from mastering equipment and meeting deadlines. Thirteen of these respondents focused on successfully completing a project and/or "coming through" in a crisis and receiving positive feedback from supervisors.

Interns, like faculty, also cited examples of personal growth. However, 13 interns recounted personal growth incidents compared to only four faculty members giving examples in this category. Under the interns' personal growth category, there were two subtypes of incidents. First ten interns described the satisfaction they received from working independently and being self-motivated. Second, three students referred to

career development, i.e., clarifying career goals. Intern career references were included as an element of personal growth because these referred to learning and gaining personal insights about a career area. None referred explicitly to being hired or to being offered a job as did the faculty responses which formed the category of career advancement.

Finally, six interns identified real world application of academic knowledge as prime examples of success. This category also included adapting communication to the job situation and understanding the problems of an agency in transition. (Although the four responses of graduate interns were excluded from the analysis, it is interesting to note that all four graduate students cited the application of theory in organizations as a major benefit of the internship. Only 23% of the undergraduates referred to this issue.)

Summary of Success Indicators. The three types of success indicators cited by both faculty and students were producing a product or having input into a decision (tangible experience), growing personally (e.g., by increased assertiveness, self-motivation, etc.), and applying theory in the work world. Faculty respondents, notably more often than interns, cited job offers as success indicators. When they did refer to career issues, interns emphasized learning about the career and assessing it in light of their personal goals; they did not cite specific job offers as success indicators.

Discussion

The first important observation about the results of this study is that, on the average, no task or interpersonal problem clearly rated as very important or very unimportant to internship success nor as occurring usually or never. Three factors may account for the mid-range rating most items received on both importance and frequency scales. First, there is a tendency for ratings to regress toward the mean of the rating scale. Second, respondents may have been biased toward describing their programs in a relatively favorable light. (This may have been a greater factor for faculty respondents who were asked to provide their college or university's name. This was done to permit a follow-up mailing to departments not responding to the original questionnaire.) Third, the ratings may legitimately reflect quite problem-free internships. Without follow-up interviews with respondents it is difficult to note which factor best accounts for the ratings. The generally positive response to internship programs by students and the growth of internship programs nationwide suggest that problems are not outweighing advantages.

Task Problems and Suggestions

The task problem areas ranking highest in importance and frequency--insufficient task instructions and insufficient feedback--are really instructional communication issues. In an internship, the academic department is asking the on-the-job supervisor to assume a teaching role toward the intern. And although each manager occasionally must and should assume a teaching role toward full time employees, that role takes on added importance in supervising an intern. Interns are less likely than full time employees to be familiar with the employing agency (or any large scale organization) and less likely to have the self-confidence and task

"savvy" that comes with greater age and experience. It is also unrealistic to expect a business manager, an editor, or a public relations staffer to have mastered the teaching skills an academic advisor might wish or to have the time, amidst the nine-to-five routine, to be a teacher.

Consequently, academicians should consider ways to help job supervisors carry out teaching functions. Such efforts might take the form of a written pamphlet or brochure making suggestions about coaching student interns. It might involve a concise workshop session for job supervisors dealing with intern supervision skills. (Of course, supervisors have full schedules and may be reluctant to spend time in a workshop. Alverno College, a pioneer in experiential education, holds a recognition banquet for its job supervisors. A brief workshop could be combined with that token of appreciation.) Finally, the advisor could attempt to give the job supervisor more guidance about such issues as feedback and instruction during face-to-face meetings before and during the internship.

This latter suggestion of increased direct interaction between advisor and supervisor may also help counteract another problem faculty ranked high on frequency and importance: too many menial tasks given the intern and too little work given. Increased advisor contact with interns and supervisors can keep the advisor informed about the nature of tasks assigned; thus the advisor can better judge what intervention, if any, is necessary. The preferred norm for intervention seems to be the advisor helping the intern who then attempts to deal directly with the job supervisor about the issue in question.

Advisors should also be sensitive to interns' needs for physical resources (desks, phones, etc.) to do their jobs. Advisors may understandably overlook this issue since it is not something they have to cope

with daily. Interns see this as a problem, doubtless becasue it can constitute a consistent "hassle" as they try to perform their tasks.

Intra- and Interpersonal Problems and Suggestions

It is in the intra- and interpersonal area that intern selection and training processes may be improved. Several interns suggested pre-internship training sessions be held which would include role-playing job situations and assertiveness training. On-going seminar sessions and more frequent counseling sessions with advisors during the internship were also suggested. These activities should help minimize the top ranking intra-personal problem of unclear learning objectives for the intern. This requires interns spending considerable time assessing their own goals as well as interns and advisors working together to refine and translate goals into relevant objectives. Advisors likely will differ in the general types of objectives they prefer. Several experiential learning experts make a strong case for behavioral objectives. A good source for further information on behavioral objectives for experiential learning is "Writing Useful Instructional Objectives," one of a series of Guides for the Improvement of Instruction in Higher Education, published by Michigan State University. Among persuasive arguments for behavioral objectives are that students are motivated and reinforced by meeting specific objectives, and the advisor's evaluation task becomes easier with behavioral objectives. It is also important to hlep the intern modify and extend objectives as the internship continues. Finally, when behavioral objectives are available to job supervisors, they may find their teaching tasks less nebulous.

In much of the preceding discsusion, references have been made to more frequent meetings of advisors, interns, and supervisors. Indeed, this is

a common theme running through suggestions for improvement and makes sense given the key problems cited. Konsky (1977) supports the need for contact and communication throughout the internship:

> If one key ingredient for a successful internship program can be isolated, it must be communication -- among faculty members, students, and cooperating agencies. Misunderstandings and unmet expectations have proven to be largely a function of communication breakdowns and not recognizing that an internships is a dynamic experience which demands flexibility from everyone involved (p. 20).

The interpersonal problems of job supervisors not soliciting intern feedback may be mitigated by face-to-face advisor, supervisor and intern meetings. Here, advisors can encourage supervisors to solict feedback from interns. In such meetings, advisors can take the lead by asking interns to give feedback to supervisors and asking both intern and supervisor to comment on the academic advisor's performance to date. The other important and frequent interpersonal problem was the intern's hesitancy to question or to give feedback to supervisors. Role-play sessions and assertiveness training, mentioned earlier, can help in this area as can those advisor counseling sessions with the student. Increased contact can also clarify for the advisor perceptions about the frequency with which some interpersonal problems occur. REcall that interns felt several interpesronal problems occurred less often than did faculty. With a better information base, advisors can focus their attention on specific problems of each internship and not worry about other problems which may not occur often.

All the emphasis on personal meetings obviously poses practical problems. First, academicians can't unduly infringe on a job supervisor's time. Supervisors are providng a service in hiring interns and cannot be expected to have professor and student together demanding weekly meetings. Advisors and interns must strike a reasonable balance in requesting time

and still maximizing benefits of the experience. Likewise, the academic advisor's time is limited. Many departments need to provide increased support in terms of a reduced class load or increased pay for advisors to spend the necessary time with interns and supervisors. Otherwise, internship responsibilities may be discharged only after regular class lectures are prepared, papers graded, university committee meetings attended, and research conducted. The effort that advising interns demands is well described by John Duley (1981):

> . . . faculty members require different skills from those they are accustomed to using in the classroom. To shift some of the responsibility for the direction of the learning from the faculty member to the student, faculty members have to be willing to move from being information disseminators to becoming enablers or facilitators (p. 15).

The facilitator role is often a much more time-consuming one than that of classroom lecturer.

The Supervisor Role. The problem of role strain for the job supervisor surfaced in this survey. It is important for advisors and interns, caught up in their own academic and personal concerns, to remember the threat that college professors and young, academically trained, energetic students may pose to the supervisor's self image. Three suggestions about this issue have emerged from this researcher's advising experience. First, in preliminary planning sessions and in on-going meetings, advisors should make every effort to recognize overtly the expertise of the job supervisor and actively incorporate the supervisor's suggestions into internship planning and procedures. Second, try to avoid placing interns under supervisors new to their positions. A newly promoted supervisor often has enough to do establishing credibility with full time subordinates and may be especially defensive about "young whippersnappers." Third, encourage interns to tactfully and openly explain their position and goals

to their supervisors, e.g., "I'm here to learn all I can from you and the experience, not to carve out a 'niche' for myself." It can be particularly important to communicate this to co-workers who may, in the absence of an explanation, see the intern as a competitor for a full time position.

Personal Growth as a Success Indicator

A final observation emerging from the critical incidents was the different emphasis placed on success indicators by faculty and students. Both faculty and students most often cited tangible experiences as indicators of internship success. However, more often than factuly, interns emphasized personal growth in addition to tangible experience: taking responsibility, working independently, becoming self-motivated. Students, even more than faculty, may understand and appreciate many values of experiential learning, knowledge that extends beyond the skills necessary to land a job. As Brooks and Althof (1979) noted:

> The value of experiential learning to liberal arts curriculum . . . is not in making students more employable (or increasing campus enrollments); rather its value is to enrich the curriculum by implementing James Coleman's proposition that the individual never really knows or has possession of his knowledge until he has tested it in a new situation (p. vii).

It is such tests that provide the student with self-knowledge also.

In sum, the internship experience is becoming firmly established in our discipline. Interns' knowledge and skill in their specialities are refined and they grow and mature personally. With increased departmental commitment, advisor support, program development, and on-going evaluation and research, internships should become increasingly valuable learning experiences.

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